LIBERTY AND EQUALITY:

A SERMON, OR ESSAY:

BEING THE SUBSTANCE
OF WHAT WAS DELIVERED FROM THE PULPIT
AT NEWLANDS,

Upon the FAST-DAY, 13th March, 1800.

To which is subjoined,

AN APPENDIX,

Containing an Analyſis of, and ſome Obſervations on, Godwin's ſyſtem of Society in his Political Juſtice.

BY THE REV. CHARLES FINDLATER,
MINISTER OF NEWLANDS.

JOHN xii. 8.—*For the poor always ye have with you.*

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1800.

BRITISH MUSEUM

To

The Right Honourable

JAMES MONTGOMERY,

Lord Chief Baron

Of His Majesty's Court of Exchequer;

AND THE OTHER HERITORS

Of the Parish of Newlands;

This Discourse

Is inscribed

In testimony of respect by

The AUTHOR.

NEWLANDS,
1. *May*, 1800.

LIBERTY AND EQUALITY:

A

SERMON.

JOHN xii. 8.—*For the poor always ye have with you.*

WE are now arrived at the ſeventh year of our eventful conteſt, in defence of thoſe fundamental principles of the ſocial order upon which all the bleſſings of civilization depend.

The great corner-ſtone of ſociety is Juſtice, protecting human induſtry by ſecuring property in its acquiſition, its enjoyment, and its tranſmiſſion.

Without ſecurity of property there can exiſt no induſtry; of courſe, no wealth, nor ſecurity of the means of ſubſiſtence; no knowledge, the reſult of ſecurity and leiſure; no expanſion of the benevolent feelings, whilſt the attention is concentrated in the anxious cares of immediate ſelf-preſervation; no funds for the exertion of benevolence, ſuppoſing it capable of exiſting.

Theſe fundamental laws of ſociety have, however, been attacked and attempted to be overturned, by

the introduction of the new doctrine of French philoſophy, the monſtrous doctrine of Equality. Not that equality, ſo dear to the heart of every free Briton, the equality of rights; the equal extenſion of the laws of juſtice to protect, without reſpect of perſons, the induſtry and property of the poor as well as of the rich: but the levelling doctrine of the equalization of property, which at once cuts up all induſtry by the roots, together with every bleſſing of civilization ariſing from human induſtry and mutual co-operation.

Nor has this doctrine been confined to the ideal ſpeculations of the cloſet; it hath been attempted to be realized in the kingdom of France, through ſcenes of the moſt unexampled cruelty and deſolation. Not contented with her own internal miſery, has France, with all the rage of proſelytiſm, been hitherto uniformly endeavouring to involve all ſurrounding nations in her own horrors. In introducing her own practical doctrines by every means of fraud or of force, ſhe was, but too often, ſucceſsful in her attempts. The virtues of a few deluded men and the vices of a far greater number united in contributing to her ſucceſs.

Viſionary, though often well meaning philoſophers, imagining human nature capable of a perfection which has never yet been evinced, but to which they conceived a rapid approach was taking place in conſequence of civilization; and aſcribing to their ideal man an angelic rather than an human nature, perſuaded themſelves that induſtry might exiſt (as ſolely prompted by the ſingle regard to general good,

good, and ſubmitted to with that perfect diveſtment of all ſelf-partiality which would lead each individual to contribute his exact proportion) without the ſpur of ſeparate property and a ſenſe of ſeparate intereſt.

In the equalization of property, or rather in its total abolition, and in the reduction of men to their primitive ſtate of ſavage equality and independence, free of all reſtraint of law, government, or artificial diſtinctions, (a ſtate which they, contradictorily, conceived might exiſt, whilſt at the ſame time all the advantages derived from civilization might ſtill be retained), they thought they could perceive nothing but the accompliſhment of the purpoſes of univerſal benevolence, and the removal of every evil experienced in human ſociety. *

Advantage was taken of this kind of generous but blind enthuſiaſm, to which inexperienced virtuous youth is moſt readily prone; and a ſect was formed, with more than Jeſuitical dexterity on the part of its leaders, by means of which it was intended that the youth of moſt promiſe in all nations ſhould be regularly trained up in conſpiracy againſt all ſocial order.

Such was the ſect of the *Illuminati*, of whoſe exiſtence or views we might be apt to doubt, from their extravagance, did there not exiſt the moſt incontrovertible evidence of the fact. †

By

* See Appendix.

† The Abbe Barruel and Profeſſor Robiſon, though writing without knowledge of each other, have, from their various ſources of information, come to the ſame concluſions. The Rev. Dr. William Ritchie, miniſter of Kilwinning, has aſſured me that, from his information while travelling on the Continent, he was led to their concluſion both as to the exiſtence and views of this ſect.

By every fair appearance of wiſdom and of virtue, its miſſionaries every where inſinuated themſelves into the confidence of young men diſtinguiſhed by their parts or affluence, in order to gain them over to the views of the ſect: they inſtructed them in all thoſe branches of knowledge which a liberal mind moſt ardently deſires; till at length hints were thrown out, in that myſterious manner beſt calculated to excite curioſity, of the exiſtence of a ſecret ſociety, maintaining an univerſal correſpondence through all nations, whoſe object was the univerſal reformation of all error and vice; that it was directed by leaders who were the wiſeſt and beſt of men, but who kept themſelves ſecret and unknown for the more eaſily effectuating their generous purpoſes of rendering all men every where, wiſe, virtuous, and happy. When the unſuſpecting virtuous enthuſiaſm of the young man ſeemed ſufficiently fired by this noble proſpect, it was hinted to him that admiſſion might be obtained into this ſociety of the wiſe and good, if, after ſufficient probation, the candidate ſhould manifeſt ſuch zeal and devotion to the orders of its ſuperiors, as ſhould make him be judged worthy of being entruſted with an active part in promoting its glorious deſigns. If the propoſal was embraced with warmth, the candidate was put upon his probation; a correſpondence was ſet on foot, through channels unknown to him, with the inviſible ſuperiors of the order; he was tried as to his implicit confidence in the ſociety and devotion to its orders, by diſcloſing to his ſuperiors all his inmoſt ſecrets, and every thing he knew of other men, and by giving his opinions upon

upon the moſt delicate and dangerous queſtions, ſo framed as to lead him to confound principles with mere prejudices: the paramount obligation of general philanthropy, held out as the object of the ſociety, to the ſuperſeding of every private obligation, was ſedulouſly inculcated; till the young candidate was inſenſibly brought to conceive that ſuch a noble end juſtified every means; and to pledge himſelf as to his readineſs to ſacrifice every private attachment, even to aſſaſſinate without remorſe his neareſt relation or deareſt friend, if ſo ordered by his ſuperiors, for the furtherance of their grand deſign. Meanwhile, in various degrees of myſterious initiation, the deſigns of the ſect were gradually developed to him under ſuch ſpecious appearances as were moſt conſonant to the preſent ſtate of his mind; in ſuch a manner, however, as to ſhake by degrees his adherence to one or other of the fundamental maxims of ſociety. At every new degree of initiation he was bound by the moſt tremendous oaths to ſecrecy and obedience. At laſt, when he had ſo far committed himſelf as to be entirely in the power of the ſociety, when he was ſo far pledged and entangled that he could not retract with ſafety, it was announced to him that the ultimate end of the ſociety, hitherto obſcurely indicated, was *Liberty and Equality*—the deſtruction of all ſocial order, the abolition of religion, of civil government, and of property; the diſſocialization of man, and his reduction to his primitive ſtate of ſavage equality. *

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* See a ſubſequent note.

The adherents of this ſect, in every country where they had gained a footing, made it their endeavour to obtain aſſurance of ſucceſs to their views by inſinuating its members into every ſtation of power or influence in the cabinet, in the army, in the ſeats of juſtice, in the church, and all other ſeminaries of education; and in bringing under its controul the preſs and every department of literature.

Long before the commencement of the French Revolution, this ſecret ſociety had gained great ſtrength, and was moſt active in diſſeminating its deſtructive principles; in France its influence precipitated the revolution into all thoſe enormities with which it was attended; and in moſt nations on the Continent of Europe it had prepared the way for the reception of the diſorganizing principle of equality.

Thus were even the virtues of men abuſed to the purpoſes of the ſubverſion of ſociety.

But further, in every civilized ſociety there exiſts a dreg and refuſe, compoſed of the profligate and unprincipled, who, being equally deſtitute of ſtock and of induſtry, are ever ready to make a prey of the property of others. While government exiſts in ſuch force as to be able to protect the fundamental maxims of ſociety, the enterprizes of this claſs are reſtrained by the wholeſome terror of the law—They look for their harveſt in the diſſolution of governments and the anarchial convulſions of revolution.

Theſe were the ſupports to which France looked forward in her attempts at univerſal diſorganization; to theſe internal ſources of treachery and not to the force of her arms, has ſhe been indebted for her vari-

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ous ſucceſſes. She preached equalization, and was received with open arms by theſe her partizans; whilſt many of the beſt affected, impoſed upon by the ſpecious illuſions of the diſciples of the ſecret ſociety, apprehended no danger; and thoſe who did, ſaw not to whom they could truſt for effectual internal reſiſtance. Different nations were, of courſe, over-run and plundered, under the maſk of fraternization and deliverance; and their wealth and ſtrength converted to the ſtill farther aggrandizement of France. No nation, under whatever form of government, was ſecure; the fatal doctrine of equality, tending alike to the diſſolution of ſociety, under every form of government, whether Republican, Monarchial, or Mixed. Accordingly, the enterprizes of France were equally directed againſt the republics of Switzerland and of Geneva, the governments of Holland, America, and Great Britain, the Italian monarchies, and the Ottoman Porte. Her rulers ſaw no proſpect of the continuance of that ſtate to which they had reduced her, but in the countenance of the imitation of other nations; their miſſionaries of the *Propaganda* were every where zealously at work; and the partizans of diſorganization were every where excited to energy, by the elevation of their hopes, upon the view of this ſuppoſed inſtance of the practability of ſucceſs. She was incapable, therefore, of maintaining the relations of peace and amity with any nation under heaven, which reſpected the fundamental maxims of ſocial order; like Iſhmael, her hand was againſt every nation, and the hand of every nation ought, from a ſenſe of common danger, to have been raiſed againſt her.

But

But the nations were in danger of being ſubdued by their own fears. Incapable, as they thought, of effectual reſiſtance, they were about to deſert ſucceſſively the common cauſe; the ſhameful and inſecure peace of ſubmiſſion was courted by many, tho' under the hardly diſguiſed proſpect of being only the laſt of being devoured; whilſt danger was childiſhly winked at to avoid fear. In this awful and alarming criſis, Great Britain alone ſtood firm; looked up to, in trembling expectation, by other nations, as involving their deſtiny in her own. Her undaunted courage has, by the bleſſing of God, been rewarded with ſafety, and we truſt ſhall be ſo rewarded henceforward. The French, who had been ridiculouſly conceived as invincible, under their ſucceſsful leader, who in fact had met with no determined oppoſition, received, under the bleſſing of God, a moſt effectual check, by the deciſive naval victory of the Britiſh hero of the Nile. Their invincible champion himſelf, with the flower of his Egyptian army, were ſhamefully repulſed from the walls of Acre, through the perſevering ſkill and intrepidity of an heroic and adventurous Engliſh Knight. Confidence was again reſtored to the deſponding nations; ſucceſs crowned their combined endeavours; and the favourable events of the laſt campaign lead us to augur well as to the ſucceſs of the next.

Meantime the power of France is weakened, in proportion to the diminution of internal danger from the diſſemination of her disorganizing principles. The value of French protection and fraternization is now better appretiated; and nations, which

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hailed her with alacrity as their deliverer, have manifeſted more joy at being emancipated from her tyranny. The cant of general philanthropy is now ſeen through; and Liberty and Equality are juſtly conceived as the watch words of plunder and of maſſacre. There is no doubt in every civilized ſtate a refuſe of the profligate and abandoned who will ever have a permanent intereſt in the diſſolution of ſociety, till their own habits are reformed; and perhaps with a few of the ſpeculative and well intentioned, even experience may not yet have entirely diſſipated the illuſions of ideal theories of general good. It is, however, certainly to be apprehended that, in every nation, all who have an intereſt in ſupporting the fundamental maxims of ſociety, all thoſe who have property, all thoſe who have induſtry to acquire property, muſt now ſee the neceſſity of union and combination, to ſupport that government which they find capable of protecting itſelf againſt all attempts at diſorganization.

The extremes of diſorder have a tendency to produce, at length, their own cure. The new order of things in France (if that can be called order which ſtands in diametric oppoſition to every maxim of ſocial order) cannot long ſubſiſt. Even thoſe cutthroats who were loudeſt in the cry of liberty and equality, in order to diſpoſſeſs the rightful owner of his property, will be the moſt ready to call for the return of juſtice, and the protection of property, to ſecure themſelves in thoſe poſſeſſions which they have uſurped; and it is not to be doubted but that, in due time, Liberty and Equality will be hooted off the ſtage with an averſion equal to the ardour with which it

was introduced. Symptoms of a return to the ordinary maxims of ſocial order ſeem even now to appear. Sudden converſions, however, are not to be expected; and theſe dangerous diſſocializing principles, which were ſo long in ripening to their full maturity, cannot be ſuppoſed to decay all at once. We muſt wait the event.

Propoſals have been made, on the part of the French, for entering upon negociations for peace. They are, however, to all appearance inſidious; they are unſpecific; they look merely to a partial peace, and not towards the general pacification of Europe. War and conqueſt may be neceſſary to the French protector, to divert the attention of the nation from his uſurpation; and partial peace, with one of the allied powers, may render him more ſecure of overcoming the reſt, that he may afterwards return to the attack with redoubled force. We have ſeen recent inſtances of the inſidious nature of peace of this kind, and had need to be upon our guard. It would be a conduct next to political inſanity, in any of the allied powers, to liſten to any terms of peace which included not in it the general pacification of Europe.

At no period ſince its commencement have we been in ſuch favourable circumſtances for carrying on the war as at preſent: a conſideration by no means juſtifying war, but which certainly ought to lead to perſevering exertion where the object of the war is juſt. Our allies ſeem at length to have been thoroughly arouſed to a ſenſe of the common danger, and have come forward with courage and exertion. Our preparations are great beyond all compariſon of

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any precedent in our hiſtory; and it is to be obſerved, that a ſtate of preparation, once eſtabliſhed, is kept up at infinitely leſs expence, than it is again re-eſtabliſhed after having been relinquiſhed. Our reſources, inſtead of being diminiſhed, ſeem greatly to have encreaſed. The ſurrender of the Dutch fleet has greatly diminiſhed the riſk of an Iriſh invaſion, the quarter where we were moſt vulnerable; and the certainty of an incorporating union with that ſiſter kingdom affords the proſpect of a great increaſe of force, concentrated in one common government, and acting as one whole; without riſk of diviſion of intereſt and of council. Why then ſhould we relinquiſh our advantages, or diſunite our allies, by liſtening to overtures for a negociation of peace, from one whoſe overtures ſeem to wear an inſidious appearance, and of the permanence of whoſe power we can as yet have but ſmall ſecurity, were we ever ſo ſecure of the ſincerity of his intentions? It is certainly our intereſt, and our duty to the general intereſts of humanity, to perſevere in the common cauſe, till ſuch time as we can obtain ſecurity both of a general and of a laſting peace. When that period arrives, it ſeems of leſs importance to ſurrounding nations whether peace is made with France under the re-eſtabliſhed houſe of Bourbon, (which might perhaps afford the moſt ſpeedy aſſurance of her reverting to the uſual order of ſociety), or under a new dynaſty, commencing in the houſe of the Corſican Bonaparte.

Such are the circumſtances under which we are called upon to humble ourſelves before almighty God

God, under a ſenſe of our manifold ſins, imploring his gracious pardon, and praying for a bleſſing upon his Majeſty's arms; that a ſucceſsful war may, under God, prove the means of ſecuring to us an honourable and a laſting peace.

We have already obſerved that our greateſt danger, all along, hath ariſen more from within than from without; not from the power of France but from her inſidious doctrine of equality. I think I ſhall not misapply your time or my own upon this occaſion, by drawing your attention to the nature and conſequences of this doctrine, ſo contrary to that order of inequality, whoſe permanence is ſo directly marked, in our Saviour's maxim, as of the appointment of God, in the ordinary courſe of providence; 'the poor ye have always with you.'

On former occaſions I have frequently alluded to this ſubject, and ſhall now take leave of it after the preſent diſcuſſion.

In regard to the occaſion that led our Saviour to utter this maxim, I ſhall juſt obſerve, that it was in the courſe of excuſing or juſtifying the conduct of Mary, ſiſter of Lazarus, who had anointed him with a box of precious ointment, in token of her general reſpect and of her gratitude for the reſurrection of her brother from death to life. Her action was open to cenſure, not being perhaps overwiſely judged, though certainly performed with the very beſt intention. 'Why this waſte?' ſaid Judas, 'why was 'not this ointment ſold for three hundred pence and 'given to the poor?' 'Not' indeed, ſays the ſacred hiſtorian, 'becauſe he cared for the poor; but be-

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'cauſe he was a thief and carried the bag.' Our Saviour does not controvert the truth of Judas's obſervation, whatever might have been the malice of its view; he excuſes, however, the woman on the footing of her good intentions; 'Let her alone, againſt 'the day of my burying hath ſhe done this; the 'poor ye have always with you; but me ye have not 'always:' As if he had ſaid, 'In ordinary life an 'extraordinary expence is excuſed in a funeral, as a 'laſt teſtimony of reſpect, however miſapplied, of the 'living to the dead; judge then of the action of this 'grateful woman with the ſame candid allowance. 'In regard to the poor, for whoſe intereſt ſuch ex-'traordinary zeal has been affected on this occaſion, 'if you are charitably inclined, occaſion will never 'be a wanting of manifeſting your benevolence to 'them; for there will always ſubſiſt ſuch inequalities 'in the human condition as ſhall render one man 'able to aſſiſt, and another needful of aſſiſtance.' 'The poor ye have always with you.'

Poor and *rich*, like *weak* and *ſtrong*, are mere comparative expreſſions, referring to no particular poſitive ſtate, but relating entirely to one another. As a man is called *weak* in compariſon with one ſtronger than himſelf, and as the ſame perſon may with equal propriety be called *ſtrong* in compariſon with one who is weaker: ſo, in like manner, may the ſame perſon be denominated *poor* in compariſon with one who is richer, or *rich* in compariſon with one who is poorer than himſelf. The import of our Saviour's maxim therefore is, that there always will ſubſiſt inequalities in the outward ſituation of men, in reference to which

which the diſtinctions of poor and rich will ever exiſt. Indeed the whole ſyſtem of practical precepts in the goſpel implies theſe inequalities of outward poſſeſſions; and duties are uniformly injoined, which could have no exiſtence but upon the ſuppoſition of ſuch inequality.

What I propoſe, in diſcourſing farther, is, firſt, to illuſtrate the truth of our Saviour's maxim; and, ſecondly, to point out ſome of the leading duties reſulting from theſe inequalities of outward condition.

I. I proceed to illuſtrate the truth of our Saviour's maxim, that there always will ſubſiſt inequalities in the outward ſituation of men. This order of things hath held good ſince the foundation of the world; and, though it may be attempted to be ſubverted, in a moment of revolutionary madneſs, it is the appointed order to which human affairs muſt neceſſarily revert, ſo long as human nature continues what it is, and ſo long as man's ſubſiſtence and accommodation continue to be derived from the ſame ſources; the fruits of the earth, and his own induſtry.

The ſubſiſtence of man is all ultimately derived from the earth; from the animals which its land and waters nouriſh, and the vegetables which it produces: and theſe he muſt conſume, either in the crude ſtate and in the given quantity in which they are yielded by the unaſſiſted powers of nature, or improved in quantity and in quality by his own art and induſtry.

Human art is not, like the inſtinct of other animals, a thing immediate, and ſubſiſting all at once in its higheſt ſtate of perfection; it is of ſlow growth

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and of continual progreſs; the reſult of attentive obſervation, and long experience, and much reflection; by means of which the laws of nature are inveſtigated, the connection of cauſes and effects aſcertained, and man is enabled to produce the effects he requires by the judicious application of their proper cauſes.

As a ſubject of progreſſive improvement, it is to be ſuppoſed that human art (if not miraculouſly aſſiſted) would at firſt diſplay itſelf in very ſimple and rude efforts; and that it would be long in attaining to thoſe high diſplays of ingenuity which are every where to be diſcerned among civilized nations. The moſt obvious mode of ſubſiſtence, which of courſe would firſt obtain in practice, would be to apply to that purpoſe the natural productions of the earth, unaided by artificial culture; to improve the fertility of the ſoil by cultivation, or to direct its fertility to the nouriſhment of plants fitted for the nouriſhment of man and other animals, inſtead of the production of uſeleſs weeds; to domeſticate the animals fitted to ſupply food and cloathing to man, to multiply their numbers by increaſing their proviſion, and defending them from the beaſts of prey. Theſe operations are the reſult of much obſervation and after thought, and could not obviouſly occur.

In this inartificial ſavage ſtate alone can men be upon a footing of perfect equality. There is no appropriation, but of ſuch of the ſpontaneous vegetable productions as each lays hold upon for immediate ſubſiſtence, or of ſuch of the animals as are caught in hunting or in fiſhing; there is no appropriation of the land or of the waters, but each is equally free to

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the commonage of nature. As there exiſts almoſt no idea of property, there can hardly exiſt a diſtinction of rich and poor. As there exiſts no property there is no occaſion for laws to define or to defend it; no need of the concentration of the whole powers of ſociety in a common government to enforce the execution of ſuch laws. As there is no co-operation required to carry on common labours of induſtry, there is no need for the ſubordination of wills to that of one common director. There can exiſt therefore no diſtinction of governor and ſubject, of ſuperior and inferior; but each man, equally independent and free from all reſtraint, acknowledges no law but his own will. No diſtinction can take place but the mere diſtinctions of nature, founded upon the differences of mental vigour or of bodily ſtrength or agility.

There probably was a period in their hiſtory when every nation, of which any information has reached us, ſubſiſted in this ſavage ſtate of equality. In ſuch a ſtate of rudeneſs and incivilization, however, no nation can poſſeſs the art of tranſmitting to poſterity any record of their own tranſactions; nor can their memory be tranſmitted to after times, unleſs their manners have been obſerved by civilized nations who are capable of recording them. In this way, however, we have arrived at the knowledge of nations exiſting under all degrees of rudeneſs and of civilization; from a dependance for ſubſiſtence upon mere natural produce, and fiſhing, and the chace; to the more ſecure proviſion of the paſturage of domeſticated animals; and the ſtill more certain ſecurity of the univerſal culture of their lands. Through all thoſe ſtages from

rudeneſs

rudeneſs to refinement, it is probable that every civilized nation has paſſed; nor is any one of thoſe ſtages more natural to man than another. It is natural for man to remain in the ignorant ſtate of ſavage rudeneſs, till he hath acquired the knowledge and the art to improve his condition; but man is ſuſceptible of improvement, and the capacity of art is coeval with human nature; he cannot remain long in a ſtate of ignorance and rudeneſs, but is neceſſarily led to improve his condition, by his own art and induſtry, ſo ſoon as he learns how it may be ſo improved.

So ſoon as men emerge from ſavage rudeneſs to a ſtate of improvement, laws and regulations muſt enſue; (without which, as will afterwards appear, no induſtry can exiſt;) by the operation of which, inequality of condition muſt neceſſarily more and more take place; and the deviation from the original equality will gradually increaſe, both in regard to outward ſituation and to intellectual acquirements; the maxim of our Saviour, intimating inequality, becoming more and more applicable, 'The poor ye have 'always with you.'

It is, nevertheleſs, to this ſtate of ſavage ignorance and rudeneſs, deſtitute of all art and induſtry, that the apoſtles of equalization refer, when they ſpeak of the *original* or *natural equality of man;* a ſtate which they affect to celebrate as the ſtate moſt congenial to the perfection and happineſs of human nature, as the original ſtate of innocence, and the golden age of the poets; and every deviation from which, into art and civilization, and conſequent inequality, they have reprobated as a deviation from original rectitude, as an

original ſin againſt ſociety, and the deſtruction of political juſtice.

If by *natural* ſuch writers merely intended to mark this ſtate as that in which men are found, while they remain without all improvement; in oppoſition to the *artificial* improvements attained to in the progreſs of civilization; in that caſe they barely remark a well known fact, which none will diſpute. If by *natural* they intend to infer that the ſavage ſtate is the only one correſponding to the eſtabliſhed order of human affairs, and that civilization is a thing out of the ordinary courſe of events, like a monſter or a miracle in animal and inanimate nature: they then aſſert a fact contradicted by conſtant experience; art and progreſſive improvement being the very characteriſtic of the nature of man, the noble endowment evincing his ſuperiority over the irrational animals. If by *natural* they (much in the foregoing ſenſe) mean to mark the ſavage ſtate, with approbation, as moſt perfect; in the ſenſe in which we denominate virtue to be natural and vice unnatural; none will adopt this concluſion who conſider, that the ſavage ſtate of equality neceſſarily implies in it, in the *firſt place*, as to outward condition, the privation of almoſt all thoſe advantages which man deſires and endeavours to obtain by his induſtry for his accommodation and convenience: and in the *ſecond place*, as to his mind, the privation of all thoſe acquired habits and endowments which evince his ſuperiority, either as an intelligent or a moral agent. In this reſpect, infancy (the ſtate in which all men are produced nearly equal) ought to be preferred, with equal reaſon, to the ſtate of manhood;

manhood; when the ſuperiority of one man over another in reſpect of improvement appears, and the original equality of infancy no longer exiſts.

The wilds of America have preſented us with the uncultivated ſtate of ſavage man, more deſtitute of the improvements of art than that in which he hath ever been found, according to any credible reports of hiſtory. There he ſubſiſts upon natural produce, unaſſiſted by art and cultivation; upon the roots and the fruits which preſent themſelves to his ſearch, or the animals he can catch in fiſhing or in hunting: unleſs perhaps we take into the account ſome very ſmall portion of land cultivated as a reſource againſt unſucceſsful hunting by the feeble hands of the women, cultivated too in common without the keen ſenſe of ſeparate property to give its ſpur to induſtry. There, there is no individual appropriation of the land or of the animals, excepting that property which the nation in common claims in its territory as an hunting foreſt, to the excluſion of other nations; the aſcertaining of whoſe boundaries too is in general the cauſe of wars of extermination betwixt all contiguous nations; in conſequence of which, nations once known have totally diſappeared *. There no inequality of rank or diſtinctions of condition can ſubſiſt from the poſſeſſion of landed property, its deſcent by inheritance, or its accumulation by purchaſe; none from the poſſeſſion and accumulation of capital ſtock

* Several ſavage nations known to the firſt European ſettlers, are now no longer heard of; exterminated probably by their hoſtile neighbours, or having periſhed of hunger.

ſtock acquired and employed in agriculture, manufactures, or commerce. All being equally dependent, from day to day, for ſubſiſtence, upon their own perſonal reſources, without permanent property of any kind; there is no need of laws to define or ſecure the rights of property, nor of combination under a permanent common government to carry ſuch laws into execution: government is unknown, excepting the tranſient union, under a chief, produced by a common ſenſe of danger, in order to repel the inroads of hoſtile invaders. Artificial ſuperiority and inferiority are not permanent; and, excepting the natural diſtinctions of ſuperior mental and bodily powers, all are alike equal, free, and independent.

This equality of the ſavage ſtate, as it hath been obſerved in the wilds of America, particularly when contraſted with thoſe evils that ariſe from the inequalities produced by civilization—for what ſublunary good is unmixed with evil?—has catched the enthuſiaſm of ſome ſpeculative minds, which have allowed themſelves to be carried away with mere partial views of the ſubject; and the wilds of America have furniſhed the prototype of thoſe doctrines of *Liberty and Equality* which have turned the world upſide down, and have endangered the diſſolution of all ſocial order and the deſtruction of all the improvements of civilized life. Here alone, ſay theſe enthuſiaſts do we behold man enjoying true liberty and independence, unfettered by all unneceſſary and oppreſſive reſtraints; here all are equally free to the common bounties of nature; here men are not born down by adventitious ſuperiority, nor mortified by the abject feelings of

inferiority

inferiority and dependance; here we meet not with the "Rich man's ſcorn,* the poor man's contumely, "the inſolence of office, the chicanery of the law, the "ſpurning of merit, nor advancement of worthleſs-"neſs."

Such enthuſiaſtic declaimers, forget to add to their picture a number of its inſeparable adjuncts, which, if attended to, would neceſſarily diminiſh their admiration.

They forget the profound ignorance in which the human mind is neceſſarily plunged in the ſtate of ſavage equality; where, the whole power of mind and body being kept inceſſantly upon the ſtretch to procure, and with difficulty, a precarious ſubſiſtence, there can be no leiſure found for inquiry and inveſtigation. They forget that where the whole attention of each individual is neceſſarily engroſſed, as it muſt be in a ſtate of ſavage equality, in the imperious paramount cares of ſelf preſervation: there can be no room for the expanſion of the benevolent affections and an enlarged humanity: and that though the male ſex may, from mutual fear, be reſtrained from mutual injury, and be made to reſpect the independence of each other: the weaker ſex, who have no ſuch protection, are univerſally enſlaved and oppreſſed by the ſtronger; condemned to perform every drudgery, but the ſervice of hunting and of war, for which their leſs robuſt frame diſqualifies them; treated

* Mr Godwin would have us to conſider as ſerious, the arguments of Mr Burke, in his vindication of Natural Society, which he wrote ironically in ridicule of Lord Bolingbroke.

ed with harſhneſs and contempt, and meeting with no friendly participation in their labours, nor encouraging approbation or ſoothing ſympathy to ſweeten their toil, or to prevent the unqualified feeling of oppreſſion from rankling in their minds—inſomuch that, in the relations of American ſavage manners, inſtances are not unfrequently found of mothers putting their female children to death, ſo ſoon as they are born, that they might deliver them from an exiſtence, in which, from their own experience, they ſaw nothing for the female ſex, but the bitterneſs of unalloyed miſery. An enthuſiaſtic admirer of the ſavage ſtate has obſerved 'that, if you find no palaces among them, you will 'find as few hoſpitals;" that if you find none of thoſe ſplendid monuments of wealth and art, which occur in a ſtate of civilization, you will find as few monuments of poverty and diſtreſs. He had evidently forgot, or did not wiſh to recollect, that, in a ſtate where each individual can with difficulty procure a perſonal ſubſiſtence by his utmoſt exertions, there can exiſt no funds for the erection of the one or of the other; no funds for either ſelfiſh gratification or for benevolent exertion; that there no comparative poverty can poſſibly exiſt; becauſe where each individual in his full vigour can with difficulty procure a ſubſiſtence for himſelf, thoſe who ſtand in need of aſſiſtance from others muſt inevitably periſh of want. He had forgot that in ſeaſons of unſucceſsful hunting even the ſtrong ties of parental affection muſt often yield to imperious neceſſity, obliging the unhappy parent to deſert or put to death his children, when he is no longer able to find ſubſiſtence for both himſelf

ſelf and them. He had forgot that at all times the aged parents, who are paſt their vigour, are, with ſolemnity, put to death by their children or neareſt relations; as the laſt melancholy kind office that can be rendered them, to prevent their dying by inches of hunger, or their being torn to pieces by the wild beaſts of the foreſt. A fooliſh admiration hath ſometimes been entertained of the general handſomeneſs and bodily vigour prevailing in a tribe of ſavages: and the admirers of original equality have repreſented it as ſo congenial to human nature as to extend its beneficial effects even to the improvement of the bodily figure. The wonder however ceaſes when the cauſe is explained: in a ſtate, where the means of ſubſiſtence are ſo very inſecure, all infants born deformed or of puny conſtitution, are immediately put to death, as their ſupport might prove a burden which cannot be provided for in ſuch a ſtate of ſociety.*

It may be proper here to add, what the admirers of equality ſeem induſtriously to have forgot, that in a ſavage ſtate, where the power of fertility in the earth is unaided by culture, and where the animals, inſtead of being domeſticated, provided for and defended by human care, are hunted, harraſſed, and perſecuted

* What ſhall we pronounce as to the univerſal practice of the expoſition of infants in the ſo much extolled republics of antiquity? Their eternal wars muſt certainly exempt them from the imputation of that over-population which prevails in the pacific empire of China. There is ſurely ſome ground for ſuſpicion, that the ſame neceſſitous ſituation, as among ſavages, gave it countenance. Property muſt have been very inſecure under ſuch convulſive democratic governments, and productive induſtry could not ſo well thrive without its proper excitement.

perſecuted, to the danger of their utter extermination; an immenſe tract of territority, comparatively ſpeaking, is required to yield even a precarious ſubſiſtence to a very inconſiderable number of half ſtarved human wretches—inſomuch that (if I rightly recollect the beſt calculations I have ſeen) a tract of country in the fertile ſoil of America, equal in extent to what in cultivated Europe would yield ſubſiſtence to a population of 1000 men, would not ſuffice to ſupport more than one miſerable ſolitary individual in his fooliſhly admired ſtate of equality and independence.

Such is the miſerable, half ſtarved, unaccommodated, unmultiplying, brutally ignorant, and ferocious condition of man; inſeparable from his exiſtence in his ſtate of ſavage equality and independence. To this condition muſt he neceſſarily be reduced, upon the practical application of liberty and equality *. To ſuch

* I have met with many inſtances of incredulity in regard to the poſſibility of the exiſtence of a ſect, entertaining, like the Illuminati, the extravagant views of reducing men to the original ſtate of ſavagiſm. Theſe views, however, appear in the ſyſtem of Godwin and his followers, though mixed with inconſiſtency. [*See* Appendix.] The ſhow of dignity in the independence of the ſavage; his compleatneſs in himſelf for all his limited purpoſes, to which he is inured from want of co-operation; the firmneſs to which he is hardened from the abſence of all ſympathy: theſe traits of his character have that in them which is calculated to inſpire enthuſiaſm. Somewhat of this enthuſiaſm appears in the high ſpirited author of *The Hiſtory of Civil Society*. His ſavage is *totus in ſe teres atque rotundus*: his civilized man, through the ſubdiviſion of labour and profeſſions, is imperfect, perhaps degraded as an individual; he is only conſiderable as the ſubordinate part of a whole. We ſhould, nevertheleſs, be apt to apprehend that a *ſhip* will ever, in human eſtimation, be preferred to a boy's *top*, or to any number of them; although the one is a complicated whole, made up of many parts; and the other a ſimple whole in itſelf, from a ſingle piece of wood.

ſuch a ſtate of ſociety our Saviour's maxim does not apply; there, there can be no diſtinction of poor and of rich: all are equally in the utmoſt ſtraits, and were any poorer, comparatively, than the generality, ſo as to depend upon the aſſiſtance of others, as no ſuch aſſiſtance can be afforded, they muſt inevitably periſh.

Thanks be to God, this brutal ſtate of ſavage equality is not deſtined to be the permanent ſtate of man. There is in him, from the original conſtitution of his nature, a tendency to continual progreſſive improvement; one ſtep, being attained, naturally leading to another; whilſt every ſucceeding generation improves upon the diſcoveries and inventions of thoſe that preceded it. Marks of this progreſſive improvement are to be traced in every nation with whoſe hiſtory we are acquainted; and, though the inſecurity of revolution and of conqueſt may have often retarded this progreſs, yet it is extremely probable that no very uſeful art, when once invented, has ever yet been totally loſt to the world; nor is it probable, from the facility of communication and of record introduced by the art of printing, that any ſuch will ever be loſt for the future; unleſs hurried into oblivion by the deſtructive ſweep of the monſtrous doctrine of equalization. Even in America, when firſt diſcovered, numbers of ſavage tribes, from a ſenſe of common intereſt, had relinquiſhed their original independence; and had coaleſced together, in the north and in the ſouth, to form the extenſive governments of Mexico and of Peru; where, under a ſenſe of ſeparate property, and laws giving it protection,

the earth was conſiderably cultivated ſo as to afford ſecure ſubſiſtence to a population comparatively numerous: and the civilization of Europe might, probably by this time, have been univerſally introduced from imitation; had it not been that the cruelty and oppreſſion of the firſt ſettlers, brutaliſed by fanaticiſm and avarice, had excited an averſion to their name and to their manners, which ſeems unconquerable and hereditary; and which ſeems to have fixed the natives ſtationary in that ſtate of ſavage rudeneſs, which, otherwiſe, independent of all imitation, muſt have been improved.

The firſt improvements to which man muſt neceſſarily attend are thoſe of the neceſſary arts of ſubſiſtence; by the ſubſtitution of the more certain reſources of the paſturage of domeſticated animals and the cultivation of the lands, to the precarious ones of mere ſpontaneous vegetable produce, or the prey caught in fiſhing or the chace.

Theſe improvements of the neceſſary arts of ſubſiſtence, as they are the firſt in point of time to which men would be impelled by neceſſity, ſo are they the great ground-work and foundation of all other improvements in civilization, whether intellectual or moral; the indiſpenſible condition, without which they could have no exiſtence. Before men can find time to attend to inquiry and inveſtigation; before the mind can emerge from the brutal ignorance and incurious ſtupidity of ſavage life, or arrive at the attainment of uſeful knowledge in things human and divine; leiſure from the imperious calls of ſelf-preſervation muſt be enjoyed, through certain ſecurity

of

of the means of ſubſiſtence. Before the benevolent affections can expand, the attention muſt ceaſe to be ſolely and anxiouſly concentrated in the preſervation of the individual: an enlarged ſympathy for the diſtreſſes of others would prove only a ſuperfluous, an idle torment to a neceſſitous individual who poſſeſſed no ſuperfluity out of which they might be relieved.

But certain regulations, either expreſsly enacted or tacitly acquieſced in, muſt neceſſarily take place, without which men can have no ſufficient inducement to betake themſelves to the practice of theſe arts of firſt neceſſity, the domeſtication of animals as a ſupply of food or raiment, or the culture of the ſoil for the ſuſtenance of man and beaſt. The eſſence of all ſuch regulations muſt conſiſt in this, 'to ſecure to every 'one, in a greater or leſſer degree, the excluſive 'poſſeſſion and enjoyment of the fruits of his own 'ſkill and induſtry,' without which, he can have no ſufficient inducement to exert them. But a man cannot be ſecured in the excluſive poſſeſſion and enjoyment of the fruits of his own induſtry without having at the ſame time conveyed to him the ſame excluſive property in that ſubject to which it hath been attached: for human induſtry creates not the ſubject upon which it works; its effects reach to nothing farther than to the altering of its qualities; the ſubject itſelf is a product of nature not of art. Suppoſe, for inſtance, I employ my ſkill and induſtry in manufacturing a quantity of wool into cloth; how is it poſſible I can be ſecured in the cloth as the fruit of my induſtry, without having conveyed to me the property of the wool, the ſubject on which my induſtry

duſtry has been exerted? Or, how am I to reap the fruits of my ſkill in taming an animal highly uſeful to man in its domeſticated ſtate; unleſs I am aſſured alſo of the excluſive property of that animal which I have ſo domeſticated by my induſtry and ſkill? Suppoſe, farther, that I have improved a piece of ground, rendering it more productive both in quality and quantity of herbage, in order to ſupport a greater number of thoſe animals I have tamed, and to whoſe multiplication and increaſe I direct my ſkill and attention; I cannot poſſibly reap the fruits of ſuch labour and cultivation, unleſs the excluſive poſſeſſion of the ſoil is aſcertained to me, for a proportionate time, by the laws or general conſent of the ſociety in which I live. If I cultivate a piece of land for a crop, I can reap no benefit from my agricultural ſkill and labour, unleſs I am ſecured at leaſt in the excluſive poſſeſſion of the ſubject during the time of ploughing, growth and reaping; how pitifully unproductive, however, would be that ſyſtem of cultivation which was ſtimulated by no farther proſpect of intereſt in the ſubject than the mere poſſeſſion of a ſingle ſeaſon! Of all improvements of any ſubject to which human induſtry can be applied, the improvement of land, in bringing it to its higheſt ſtate of uſeful production, is unqueſtionably that which requires the moſt expenſive outlay of ſkill, induſtry, and capital; and is that alſo which requires the greateſt length of time to yield back its proper return. Accordingly, in every civilized ſtate, views of indiſpenſible utility have gradually led to the extenſion of the right of property in land into a right of perpetuity; as no temporary

poſſeſſor

poſſeſſor can poſſibly have the ſame intereſt in executing ſuch expenſive and permanently uſeful improvements as a perpetual proprietor.

In this manner does the right of property in moveables and in land originate, in the perceived neceſſity of its acknowledgement and protection, in order to excite induſtry in thoſe arts of primary neceſſity, which are indiſpenſibly neceſſary to every farther advance in civilization. As views of utility are more enlarged and enlightened, the right of property hath been proportionably aſcertained as more compleat; as inferring, not only the excluſive poſſeſſion to the proprietor, but the power of alienating his ſubject, either gratuitouſly or in exchange for ſomething elſe. Nay, as the effects of well directed human art are of incomparably more permanent endurance than the frail life of man; in order to prevent the views of human induſtry from being confined to ſuch a narrow ſeries of effects, as may be enjoyed and exhauſted within the ſhort period of a ſingle life; in order that it may be ſtimulated to purpoſes from whence ſucceeding generations may reap beneficial conſequences; the laws tacit or expreſſed of every nation, raiſed in any degree above ſavage barbarity, have aſcertained a ſort of continuation of the right of property to the poſſeſſor after his death, in the perſon of his deſcendants or other natural objects of his affection; and a right of ſucceſſion hath been invariably eſtabliſhed by giving validity to poſitive or conſtructive deſtination—a right, in a certain degree of extenſion, of the higheſt public utility, in preventing induſtry from confining itſelf to the view of making proviſion merely

merely for a ſingle life; in encouraging the continued accumulation of the wealth of ſociety, by preventing capital from being diſſipated in the ſame life-time in which it was acquired—a right, however, which, without certain reſtraints, may be abuſed to the purpoſes of injuſtice and caprice. *

Such are the regulations inſeparable from civilization and indiſpenſible to its exiſtence; regulations inſuring to the induſtrious the fruits of his induſtry, along with the ſubject in which it is neceſſarily inherent; regulations protecting property in its acquiſition, enjoyment, and tranſmiſſion: regulations originating in that native ſenſe of juſtice, which would teach us, from a ſenſe of our common nature and feelings, to avoid and refrain from the reception or infliction of the injury of diſappointing reaſonable expectations; the dictates of which are confirmed by the moſt enlarged views of public utility, and whoſe deciſions are adopted into the laws of every well regulated community, and enforced by its power concentrated in its government.

The adoption of ſuch regulations neceſſarily infers the aſſumption of a common government, in concentrating ſomewhere the common force of the ſociety, to prevent their infringement from internal violence or external aggreſſion; elſe their enactment into laws would have only the force of mere inefficient recommendation. Savage independence can *then* no longer exiſt; a certain degree of liberty muſt be relinquiſhed,

* Do not entails, in that unlimited extent to which the power is carried, fall under this deſcription?

ed, and a certain degree of controul muſt be ſubmitted to, elſe government can poſſeſs no force to enſure its purpoſes. In regard to the effecting of theſe ends of government, varying views have ſuggeſted various means. The two extremes into which men have been apt to run are, *firſt*, when the jealouſy of independence has made them ſo far circumſcribe the powers of the magiſtrate as to render them too weak and inefficient to accompliſh their intention; or *ſecondly*, when the anxiety of protection has led to the conferring of abſolute and unlimited power, ſo as to render the ſubjects a prey to their governors. Thoſe are certainly the beſt contrived governments which are found in experience to anſwer beſt their great end, in extending equally to all their ſubjects protection and ſecurity of life, liberty, and property. In theſe reſpects, our own happy conſtitution, notwithſtanding thoſe imperfections which may be expected in every human inſtitution, need not ſhrink from a compariſon with any form of government that ever yet exiſted in antient or in modern times.

Meantime, all government, under whatever form, is alike deſtructive of uncontrolled ſavage liberty and independence; and the doctrine of liberty and equality muſt equally prove deſtructive to all ſorts of governments. Whilſt government of any kind ſubſiſts, there muſt ſubſiſt the marked inequalities of ſuperior and inferior, governor and ſubject, thoſe who command and thoſe who obey. In proportion as the great end of all government is attained, in the aſcertainment and protection of the right of property, does the deviation from the original ſtate of ſavage equali-

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ty of poſſeſſions increaſe; and, according to the different degrees of induſtry and accumulation in individuals or of inheritance from anceſtors, the outward conditions of men admit of every poſſible variation in point of inequality: betwixt the extremes of their pooreſt and their richeſt members will be found the great maſs of every ſociety, all differing from each other in point of outward poſſeſſion, and all capable, with like propriety, of being deſigned indifferently either rich or poor according to the extreme with which they are compared. The ſame order of inequality muſt alſo neceſſarily take place in regard to internal acquirements, intellectual, religious, or moral; according to the different degrees of leiſure ariſing from eaſe or ſtraitneſs of outward condition; or, perhaps ſtill more, according to the uſe or abuſe of ſuch degrees of leiſure as are enjoyed. Nor can civilized man be again reduced to his original unimproved ſtate of brutal ſavage liberty and equality till government is torn up by the roots, till ſociety is diſſolved, till juſtice, the corner-ſtone of ſocial order, is thrown down, and the right of property annihilated; that, induſtry having once more entirely ceaſed, man may revert to his original mode of ſubſiſtence upon the ſpontaneous products of nature: a mode of ſubſiſtence to which few of the civilized nations of Europe could revert; without the neceſſity of exterminating perhaps 999 individuals (many of them poſſeſſed of talents and acquirements doing honour to human nature) out of every 1000; that the lands, at preſent affording ſubſiſtence for that 1000, may ſuffice, as an hunting foreſt, to ſupport the miſerable

exiſtence

exiſtence of one ignorant brutal and ferocious ſavage; whoſe exiſtence, even in the reckoning of the moſt unfeeling philanthropic philoſophy, is not an object deſerving of being attained at ſuch diſproportionate expence.

Thus have I endeavoured to analize the doctrine of Liberty and Equality; in tracing it to its prototype, and in marking its conſequences: and I am confident it is manifeſt, to the conviction of every impartial perſon hearing me, that, if man is to aſpire at thoſe improvements of which he is ſuſceptible, his natural ſtate of equality and uncontrolled liberty muſt of neceſſity be relinquiſhed; that in proportion to his improvement inequality muſt increaſe: that to reſtore him to his original liberty and equality, would be to annihilate every improvement, to reduce him to that rude ſtate in which he is hardly diſtinguiſhable from the brutes, but as a brute of ſuperior addreſs and cunning.

II. I proceed to the ſecond thing propoſed, to point out ſome of the duties reſulting from that inequality which neceſſarily takes place in man's progreſs to improvement in civilization, and which is marked, as of the ſettled order of providence, in our Saviour's maxim, 'The poor always ye have with 'you.' Not that civilization introduces diſtreſs, from which the ſavage ſtate is exempted; on the contrary, the meaneſt beggar of civilized Europe, in regard to ſecurity of the means of ſubſiſtence and in regard to knowledge and extent of intellectual range, enjoys

advantages ſuperior to what can poſſibly be poſſeſſed by man in his primitive ſavage ſtate of liberty and equality; but merely that inequalities muſt neceſſarily enſue, in reſpect of which, compared to each other, men may be denominated rich and poor; and almoſt all, indiſcriminately, either poor or rich, according to the ſtate of thoſe with whoſe theirs is compared. What follows will therefore equally concern all; according to the different views in which they ſurvey their ſituation.

1ſt Do you then compare your ſituation with that of thoſe who poſſeſs ſuperior advantages internal and external? You, then, feel yourſelf comparatively poor in body and in mind, in outward eſtate and in intellectual attainments.

If you wiſh not to poiſon every comfort of your own, to deſtroy the peace of your neighbour, and to diſturb the order of ſociety; beware of Envy: though an evil of the creation of your own imagination, it is really the moſt ſerious evil to which you are expoſed. Think of the advantages poſitively within your reach, and you will bleſs God for having caſt your lot in a land of civilization.

Are you mortified at the ſuperiority of others? Has this man inherited from temperate anceſtors, and preſerved entire, by his own temperance, a vigorous health, with ſtrength and comelineſs of perſon; whilſt you are tainted with hereditary diſeaſe, of puny conſtitution and deformed, or have deſtroyed a ſound conſtitution by your own debauchery? Has this other raiſed a fortune by his own induſtry or inherited it by deſcent; whilſt you have derived nothing from inheritance,

inheritance, or have ruined your circumſtances by your ſloth and extravagance? Is another poſſeſſed of genius or of induſtry; has he applied his leiſure to the cultivation of his mind, and attained to diſtinguiſhed ſuperiority in intellectual energy and acquirements; whilſt you, leſs favoured by nature, have alſo loſt your opportunities of improvement by your own ſhameful neglect? Or is another raiſed to well earned diſtinction, by a ſteady perſeverance in the road of honour and of duty; whilſt you remain ſunk in the public eſtimation, and in your own, through the inherent meanneſs of your character?—What is the demand of Juſtice in ſuch caſes? muſt every advantage, every excellence, be relinquiſhed, becauſe, forſooth, unattained by you? muſt human nature at large be degraded; becauſe you are diſhonourable and mean?

Malignant Jacobin levellers would attempt to perſuade you, that all ſuperiority is injuſtice—that diſtinction of property ought therefore to be aboliſhed; the Ariſtocracy of talents proſcribed; obedience and reſpect to magiſtracy ſhaken off. They will affect to tell you, as a mighty and a bold diſcovery, (what indeed is the moſt obvious and trite of all obſervations) that magiſtrates are mere men like yourſelves; and perſuading fools that they have imparted to them *the ſecret*, may lead them to believe that they have hitherto been governed by impoſture†. But every man

† Levellers make it their continual endeavour to vilify Government, and there is nothing ſo abſurd, that impotent malignity will not alledge, or that unreaſoning credulity may not be made to ſwallow. I have heard it for inſtance, maintained that the preſent ſcarcity and dearth were owing to the efforts of Government to prevent importation. The proper anſwer to ſuch allegations would be to ſet their author in the ſtocks.

man of common underſtanding, who attends to the fundamental ſocial maxims upon which all improvement is built, will be upon his guard againſt their dangerous inſinuations; will deſpiſe their cant of Philanthropy; and reprobate their Liberty and Equality, as the overturning of civilization and the introduction of brutal ſavagiſm.

Far be it, however, from me, whilſt I caution you againſt envy, to attempt repreſſing the generous ardour of emulation, which excites to every thing great and good in character and in action. Purſue ſtrenuouſly every honourable end by honourable means. Endeavour to ariſe to that height to which others have attained: but baniſh from your boſoms that mean, malignant, inverted ambition, which, inſtead of leading you to riſe, by honourable effort, to the level of thoſe that excel you, would make you attempt to level them to the ſtandard of your own inferiority. 'Covet earneſtly the beſt gifts;' theſe are the moſt acceſſible to every one's reach; did they but know how to appretiate their value! 'Whatſoever things are true, whatſoever things are honeſt, whatſoever things are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things,' ſays the Apoſtle. 'A good man,' ſays Solomon, 'is ſatisfied from himſelf.' The true dignity of man is attainable in every ſituation; in a life uniformly regulated by the maxims of piety and of virtue; this alone enſures the decided applauſe of conſcience, and the praiſe of God.

Perhaps

Perhaps you perſuade yourſelf that you could ſubmit, without repining, to that *real diſtinction* which is founded in ſuperiority of talents or of worth: but that you cannot bear, with patience, that ſuperiority which is aſſumed over you, by the oſtentation of the *mere artificial diſtinction* of ſuperior worldly poſſeſſions. But if the rich, in this ſenſe, are ſo ſilly as to conceive true ſuperiority to reſide in ſuch adventitious diſtinctions; do not you betray an equal littleneſs of mind, in being mortified by ſuch fancied inferiority?

2*d*. Do you compare yourſelf with thoſe who are your inferiors in point of advantages; and do you ſeem *rich* in the enjoyment of your inward or external poſſeſſions? Let then your moderation be conſpicuous. Every advantage poſſeſſed is proper matter of joy and of thankſgiving; ſuperior endowments, intellectual and moral, are juſt cauſe of exultation.

Let your advantages, however, be fairly acquired and juſtly rated; let thoſe of the mind and of the heart be real, and not merely an hypocritical aſſumption.

Beware of inſult; beware of malignity. Look upon your neighbour's deficiencies, whether perſonal or external, with Chriſtian pity, and not with malignant triumph. Raiſe yourſelf by every honourable art; but depreſs not your brother by the arts of malice. Be willing to diſtribute and ready to communicate, to thoſe that need, ſuch of your advantages as are communicable in their own nature: but beware of being officious or intermeddling, and ſuffer every one with quietneſs to do his own work. With thoſe who are not debaſed, it will ever be accounted

'more bleſſed to give than to receive:' where your fellows can render you an equivalent by their own honeſt induſtry, encourage and reward that induſtry; rather than load them with a gratuitous obligation; above all things, refraining from the accurſed attempt of debaſing their minds, by requiring, in return, the proſtitution of truth, or a ſervile compliance with your vitious inclinations. This is one of the beſt exerciſes of Chriſtian charity.

Caſes, however, will occur, in which the diſtreſſed have it not in their power to render any equivalent for the relief they ſtand in need of. For all ſuch caſes will the charitable be prepared, with an heart ready to ſympathize and an hand ſtretched forth to relieve. This is the proper department of Chriſtian almsgiving.

Benevolence, we already obſerved, is the peculiar fruit of civilization. The ſavage, preſſed by his own wants, has neither leiſure to attend to the wants of others, nor the power to relieve them: he indulges no uſeleſs ſympathy, nor expects any in return; accuſtomed to depend ſolely upon his own reſources, he neither gives nor expects either counſel or co-operation: wrapt up in himſelf, diſſocialized into individuality, he knows nothing of ſocial communication, and habitual taciturnity marks his character. He feels no connection with his fellows, till forced into union by a common ſenſe of danger to repel a common enemy; the protection and aid mutually given and received then alone unites him in the bonds of ſympathy; his affection to his tribe is then alone ardent, and his ſentiments of vengeance are alſo equal-

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ly ardent; expecting no pity if taken captive in war, he is as incapable of pity to a vanquiſhed foe. *

As wealth increaſes with civilization, to the credit of human nature, a benevolent attention to diſtreſs is enlarged with the power of relieving it. I appeal to facts.

Our own nation hath, of late, been advancing with rapid ſtrides to the acquiſition of wealth and of every other advantage of civilization; and certainly our national benevolence hath kept pace with our progreſs in theſe advantages. At no former period did there ever exiſt ſo many charitable foundations for the relief of diſtreſs of every kind: infirmaries for the ſick, who cannot be attended at home; with diſpenſatories for the gratuitous diſtribution of medical advice and of medicine: hoſpitals for every deſcription of the diſtreſſed; for the aged and infirm, for orphans, for foundlings, for the lying-in; aſylums for the blind; aſſociations for the relief of the deſtitute ſick: even vice itſelf is not aſſumed as a pretext for excluſion from charitable regard and aſſiſtance; but philanthropic ſocieties are inſtituted, and Magdalene hoſpitals erected for the purpoſes both of relief and of reformation; whilſt the recent multiplication of friendly ſocieties (whoſe intention and tendency cannot be too much commended) ſhows that Chriſtian benevolence is confined to no one claſs. Nor is only general ſyſtematic

* The American ſavage eats his captive, after torturing him to death by every invention of the moſt refined cruelty; whilſt the glory of the captive conſiſts in defying his tormentors to vanquiſh his conſtancy, and in inſulting them, in his death ſong, for their unſkillfulneſs in the art.

ſyſtematic proviſion made for ſuch diſtreſſes as may be foreſeen; but, no ſooner does any particular diſtreſs ariſe from ſcarcity or from the calamities of war, than ſubſcriptions for relief are filled up, to an extent truely aſtoniſhing; particularly when we conſider the unparalleled weight of taxation incurred in a neceſſary war in defence of the ſocial order and of all the bleſſings of civilization.

Benevolence to our fellow men is the beſt tribute we can offer to almighty God, in acknowledgement of the many mercies and ſignal ſucceſſes he has conferred upon us as a nation; and is alſo the beſt mode of enſuring their continuance. It will ſo be accepted of; 'Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the 'leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto 'me.' *

* Were it not to lead to too long a diſcuſſion it might have been ſatisfactory to have traced the mode, in which, under the over-ruling providence of God, even the vices of men tend to diffuſe through the whole maſs of ſociety the advantages of civilization.

Mere vanity, thus, ofttimes ſupplies the want of benevolence in the relief of diſtreſs.

Avarice, too, accompliſhes many of the purpoſes of benevolence joined to prudence. Though the avaricious is equally deſtitute of that rational ſelf-love, and of that humanity which would lead to the proper uſe of wealth, either in regard to himſelf or others; though his views extend no farther than merely to add to that ſtore whence no uſe is to be derived: yet, in proſecuting his purpoſe, he does little more than what a wiſe and good man would do. He muſt employ his capital, or (which is the ſame in effect) lend it to others, for intereſt, who will employ it in laying it out, as the wages of induſtry, in that uſeful labour whoſe product will replace it with its proper profit; this profit he will not devote entirely to conſumpt, but will add the greater part of it to his capital; enabling it, at its next employment, to ſupport a ſtill greater quantity of productive labour. Thus the general capital of ſociety is augmented, enabling it not only to ſupport but extend its agriculture, manufac-

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tures, and commerce. The augmentation of capital ſeeking employment, increaſes the demand for uſeful labour, and in conſequence raiſes its wages; whilſt the greater quantity of labour put in motion muſt neceſſarily increaſe the quantity of the products of labour, ſo that they become cheaper in the market. The labourer meantime gains at both ends; he gets more wages for his labour, and his wages go farther in the purchaſe of the products of labour, in the neceſſaries and accommodations of human life; and the wealth of ſociety is thus diffuſed through every claſs.

The abject ſenſualiſt would conſume all his wealth in pampering theſe bodily appetites he ſhares in common with the brutes. But he can conſume no more than the capacity of his ſtomach will receive; the reſt he muſt divide with thoſe who aſſiſt him in ſelecting and preparing his own ſmall portion. His brutalized mind may be unfit for, and have no reliſh of, intellectual exertion; yet his vanity may lead him to become the patron of learning, ſcience, and the fine arts.

Knowledge and learning are incapable of being hoarded up. The reputation of them will not be declined by thoſe that deſerve it; the vain cannot diſpenſe with it. There is no danger that they ſhall not be diffuſed: the danger is that that time ſhall be miſpent, in uſeleſs communication, which might have better been employed in acquiring what was worth communicating. The preſent publication may perhaps juſtly be quoted as an illuſtrative inſtance.

APPENDIX.

THE genuine profeſſors of equality, thoſe who look to it as the licence to plunder, cannot be expected to be impreſſed by the foregoing arguments. What intereſt indeed can we ſuppoſe the banditti of the various civilized ſtates of Europe to take in the preſervation of that order which repreſſes their efforts? Of what eſtimation, in their eyes, are any improvements intellectual or moral? The coercion of brute force is the proper anſwer to their clamour and the proper defence againſt their enterprizes.

There are others, who can appretiate all the value of civilization, who, nevertheleſs, have eſpouſed the doctrine of equalization; from a viſionary conception that civilization may ſtill be retained, though equality were introduced. The moſt diſtinguiſhed perhaps of theſe is Godwin, author of *Political Juſtice*—an author who ſeems to have reached to an high degree of ſuperiority in thoſe mental attainments which are the fruits of civilization; and to have conſiderably infringed, in practice, upon his own favourite equality, in reſpect of the *ariſtocracy of talents*. His works may have been dictated by miſtaken philanthropy, or

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the ſpleen of envied unattained diſtinction. They are retailed, by whole eſſays at a time, by the democratic noveliſts.

This author allows that civilization muſt at firſt have originated in the eſtabliſhment of property and conſequent government, ſubordination, and inequality; but, *that* being once eſtabliſhed, *theſe*, he apprehends, may be thrown aſide; as ſcaffolding no farther needed when the building is erected—though ſurely there exiſts the ſtrongeſt preſumption, *a priori*, that the continuance of the operation of the primary cauſe yields the beſt ſecurity for the permanence of the effect.

He aſſumes as a principle the *perfectibility* of human nature to a degree incalculably greater than we are warranted to expect from the experience of all paſt ages; and this aſſumed conjectural principle is the foundation of his viſionary ſyſtem. That there is in man a continual tendency to perfection, to which he is making approximations in a geometric progreſſion; each ſucceſſive ſtep being accelerated, as ſetting off from an advantage ground previouſly gained: that this progreſs depends upon the uncontrolled energy of mind, through which truth is elicited from the colliſion of opinion, in the courſe of unreſtrained diſcuſſion; which truth, ſo elicited muſt be all prevalent over the underſtanding, to which truth alone is conſonant; and muſt neceſſarily lead to all virtue, as the will neceſſarily follows the judgement, and as vice is nothing more than mere error in judgement.*

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* Video meliora proboque, deteriora ſequor.

That this proceſs is not merely *morally probable* but *abſolutely neceſſary;* all human actions being bound in the adamantine chains of *abſolute neceſſity;* as our author attempts to prove from the arguments of David Hume—nor does he ſtart at the conſequences of this doctrine; but admits them all in their fulleſt extent: As, that there is neither merit nor demerit in human actions; no difference betwixt injury and damage; betwixt the evils ſuffered from the crimes of voluntary agents, and thoſe proceeding from the noxious qualities of inanimate cauſes: that remorſe for crimes is abſurd, as alſo reſentment againſt them; that reward and puniſhment are equally prepoſterous; that the infliction of puniſhment, *in vindictam publicam*, is mere wanton cruelty, ſociety having no juſtifiable interference except in mere prevention of crimes by reſtraint.

Through the facility of communication, and the univerſal diffuſion of knowledge by means of printing, our author ſuppoſes that the era is faſt approaching, if it hath not already arrived, when mind, now thoroughly awakened to activity, will rapidly attain to the knowledge of all truth through its own operation; if only ſuch obſtructions are removed as repreſs its energy. That it is the paramount duty of every lover of humanity to labour inceſſantly, in his ſphere, to remove every impediment in the courſe of the intellectual proceſs; every thing which places mind under any kind of influence or controul: that by ſpeech and by writing he ſhould conſtantly inculcate upon his fellow citizens the abſurdity of ſubmitting to the reſtraints of what, hitherto, they had been accuſtomed,

ed, through mere prejudice, to conſider as obligations of duty: that engagements, promiſes, oaths, are of no obligation longer than while the ſame views are retained that were entertained when they were contracted; and that, meanwhile, voluntarily to retain the ſame views is a ſpecies of mental ſuicide, marring the proceſs of thought and the diſcovery of truth: that government of every kind ought to be aboliſhed, and every law abrogated, as fettering the progreſs of mind, by preſcribing a fixed ſyſtem to conduct and to thought: that co-operation in any common deſign is alſo to be avoided, as impoſing the ſubordination of will to will: co-habitation is alſo hurtful, as neceſſarily inferring mutual accommodation and ſubſervience; and under this head marriage is proſcribed: creeds and teſts, religious or political, are alſo abſurd, as cramping the free energies of mind, whoſe reſult is perfection or approximations to perfection: that all ties, in ſhort, binding man to man, hitherto looked upon as obligatory, ſhould be conſidered as a rope of ſand; and that to attain to the perfection of his nature man muſt be diſſocialized into the moſt unconnected individuality—that men are already ſo near to perfection (according to the infallible diſcoveries of the new philoſophy) that the experiment may *now* be ſafely hazarded; and that, *then*, when mind ſhall have been entirely freed from all reſtraint, it would be ſurpriſing to ſee how ſpeedily the *opus magnum** would be compleated through the rapid operation of the intellectual proceſs—if the experiment ſhould unhappily miſcarry, the philanthropic philoſopher

* The diſcovery of the philoſophers ſtone.

pher would ſtill have this ground of conſolation and of mental exultation, *magnis tamen excidit auſis.** Beſides what mighty evil is there to be apprehended, even though the experiment were made a little prematurely? nothing more, ſurely, than the mere intervention of a little *anarchy*, in which a few generations might be ſwept away, till the point of reaſon was ſettled in the colliſions of opinion; which would alſo the ſooner be ſettled from the removal of all reſtraint upon thought, and from the neceſſity of coming to a concluſion in order to terminate the uproar: and in the eye of cool impartial philanthropy, of what eſtimation are the ſufferings of a few generations of individuals in compariſon of the general good of the ſpecies?

Though men at preſent ſeem to appear to our author ſo ripe for the projection of the grand experiment of the diſſolution of all government, he ſeems to heſitate as to the equalizing experiment in regard to property.

He allows that while men continue attached to ſeparate property as at preſent; that, till once they have attained to the true eſtimate of good, and have learned to conſider it as reſiding in the endowments of the mind and of the heart, and not in the gifts of fortune, to equalize property could not be effected without reſiſtance, and would be only to perpetrate a world of gratuitous cruelty without the leaſt proſpect of a change of ſyſtem. He ſeems however to think that the æra is faſt approaching when men, loſing this attachment

* He miſcarried in a great attempt.

tachment will be ready voluntarily to relinquish all distinction of property; that meantime, in order to hasten forward a little this new order of things, a degree of salutary *violence* might perhaps not be amiss; that the present influence of property, creating ascendancy and subserviency, and thus fettering the progress of the mind towards truth, might be removed and the new order of things be the more speedily introduced. For this end our lands must be franchised into commonage and our pasturing animals be considered in the light of game, that all may have an equal right to all. As a preparation for this new order or the violent measures which are to hasten it, our author denies the distinction of rights into *perfect* and *imperfect*; asserts that duty and right are commensurate and each perfect in its kind: that what it is the duty of any one to give, it is, *in the strictest sense* his duty so to give; and what it is his duty to give, the other can *in the strictest sense* demand, as his right to receive: that it is an abuse of language, and the insult of an equal, to speak of favours conferred; that it is meanness to think that an obligation of gratitude is imposed; and to feel inferiority to an equal on this account; that there is no difference betwixt benevolence and justice; but that impartial benevolence making all equal in both power and property, is no more than strict *Political Justice*.

After the abolition of property; our author assumes that his man, approximated to perfection, would continue to prosecute those industrious labours necessary to his subsistence and accommodation, impelled by disinterested benevolence alone; each insulated (according

cording to the diſſocializing ſyſtem) into his individual capacity; without government, law, or mutual co-operation; each individual, in perfect *bona fide*, undertaking preciſely that proportion of labour which fell to his ſhare, aſcertained not by convention, but diſcerned intuitively by reaſon; one, without previous concert or any view to ſubſequent commerce or barter, (beggarly principles, moſt deſtructive of perfection according to Mr and Mrs Godwin), betaking himſelf to the making of cloaths, houſes, or furniture; and another to procuring of food, &c.; and each ready to *take* not *receive* from another whatever that other had and the firſt wanted, and the other *vice verſa* to act in the ſame way by him; in ſome unexplained myſtical mode of tranſaction, which, however, was to imply no idea of reciprocity or barter. That meantime, neceſſary labour being equally divided, what fell to the ſhare of each would conſtitute a mere wholeſome recreation, not occupying above a twentieth of his time. That each thus enjoying an equal proportion of leiſure, this leiſure would alike be employed by all in carrying on the improvement of mind to the knowledge of all truth, phyſical, intellectual, and moral: which, through ſuch univerſal effort, aided by the conſcientious equalizing communication of every reſult, would ſoon riſe to ſuch height of perfection *that mind would at length become omnipotent over matter*. That then labour might probably be altogether ſuperſeded; automaton ploughs and other inſtruments being invented, which might perform their work by inſtinct or under mere verbal direction. That man's intellect obtaining a ſupreme

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aſcendant over his bodily frame, he might contrive to diſpenſe with ſleep that great waſter of his time: or to prolong life to eternity in never failing youth and vigour; and when population, undiminiſhed by death, came to pleniſh the earth to the utmoſt extent of its capacity of yielding means of ſubſiſtence, he might withdraw the ſexual appetite altogether from his conſtitution to prevent unneceſſary diſturbance—or, we might add, (as 'twere pity propagation ſhould ſtop, and as we can never have enough of ſuch a perfect kind), might not perfect man contrive to diſpenſe with victuals altogether, that there might be no ſuch check to population?

The boundleſs extravagance of this ſyſtem affords one proof among many that the *intellectual ſhock of the French revolution* has unſettled the principles of ſome of the ſtrongeſt heads, as it has totally deranged many weak ones. *

* A book has fallen in my way by an anonymous author of the latter deſcription, called *Intellectual Electricity*. The author, taking to the letter of the Frenchified figures of Godwinical phraſeology, ſuch as *intellectual ſhocks* and *electrical burſts of the ſoul*, has conceived the thinking ſubſtance to conſiſt of the electrical fluid amalgamated with oxygen: he profeſſes to write from his own experience, and conſiders the ſtate of thought to depend upon the electric ſtate of the atmoſphere; he receives communication of ideas from the electric ſpark, and his thoughts are never ſo active and buſy as in a thunder ſtorm. From the ſymptoms he deſcribes when receiving mental communication, ſuch as vertigo and flaſhings before his eyes, we ſhould ſuſpect approaching palſy or apoplexy, and would preſcribe bleeding and a bliſter; though, if it is only a caſe of hypochondriaſis, perhaps more generous diet with exerciſe in the open air would be more effectual. He notices the imperfection of language as the repreſentative of thought and ſeems to propoſe a more full and explicit mode of tranſmiſſion by ſparks or ſhocks;—we doubt not but that, according to their various theories of the compoſition of the ſoul, we ſhall have ſuch authors

If men were all ſupremely wiſe and virtuous, it would follow that all would at all times do what was right: that government and law would be impertinent interferences in attempting to regulate what needed no foreign regulation: that ſpecific contracts as to future conduct would be ſuperfluous: and that induſtry without the ſtimulous of a ſenſe of ſeparate intereſt might continue to be carried on from a common ſenſe of duty. It is poſſible, were the whole human race to be in one night perfectly illuminated in truth and ſanctified thoroughly in rectitude by the irreſiſtible agency of God's grace, that ſuch a ſyſtem might be realized.

Meanwhile, upon the credit of mere philoſophic viſions, (kindled, at one time, into a ſpecies of frenzy by their ſuppoſed realization in the French revolution,) it were ſurely madneſs to throw ſociety looſe to its foundation; either in the perſuaſion that man had attained already to ſuch perfection; or that his approximations to it would proceed in an incalculably accelerated ratio, upon abſtracting every cauſe which had hitherto contributed to his civilization, but which now were diſcovered to be impediments to

thors improving upon Godwin's ſyſtem of perfection, by the total ſuperſeſſion of language, the ſubſtitution in its room of communication by oxygenating looks, by animal magnetiſm, or by ſome mode ſtill more refined or entirely ſpiritual. This author, like all other weak-minded revolutioniſts, is alſo a prophet. He perceives great virtue in numbers, and particularly in the combinations of the number eight. He expects wondrous events in the year 1888—and, though it ſeems to have eſcaped him, we would beg leave to ſuggeſt for his next edition that the year 8888 cannot poſſibly be pregnant with an event of leſs importance than the day of judgment itſelf. But enough of this worthy ſucceſſor of Jacob Behmen.

to his farther progreſs by the light of the new philoſophy.

The ſtunning din of the French revolution, vociferating Liberty and Equality as the conſummation of the views of philanthropy, had totally overſet the judgement of many a philoſophic mind: a new Saturnian age had been ſuppoſed to have returned, the reign of prejudice to have ceaſed, and reaſon to have become ſupreme and triumphant; whilſt an irrefragable inſtance was ſuppoſed to ſtand in point, to refute every objection of cool and timid reaſoners againſt the practicability of ſuch ſchemes of renovation.

Theſe enthuſiaſtic viſions have however now been diſſipated by experience; and were we to fix upon an era, in which human nature had been exhibited in its ſtate of utmoſt degradation, it would be that in which brutality itſelf was idolized by a whole nation in the apotheoſis of the deteſtable and infamous Marat. Liberty and Equality ſeem to have terminated their career in military deſpotiſm; and every lover of humanity is put on his guard againſt fanatic philanthropy. *

Although Goodwin reprobates, in words, the idea of ſeparate property, it yet forces itſelf upon his conception as inſeparable from man's exiſtence, even under its moſt perfect mode of which any conceivable notion can be formed. What other idea can we affix

* From the Anti-Jacobin Review of February 1800, it would appear that Godwin, who is certainly moſt reſpectable in literature, ſeems, in ſome of his late publications, to be retracing his ſteps.

affix to that *appropriated ſphere of action, which* he obſerves, *muſt not be introached upon; but muſt be preſerved ſacred and inviolable to each diſtinct individual?* Every labour of man certainly implies an object upon which that labour is exerciſed; and even in his moſt perfect ſuppoſeable ſtate, unleſs his activity be confined to mere metaphyſical reſearch into the operations of his own mind, this object muſt be ſomething external to himſelf; but how his appropriate ſphere of activity can be reſerved to him undiſturbed, either in his labours for ſubſiſtence, or in inveſtigating the laws of nature in ſearch of truth; without ſecuring him to a leſs or larger extent, in the excluſive poſſeſſion and uſe (or in other words, the property) of the ſoil he cultivates, the animal he tames, the materials he ſubjects to philoſophical analyſis, with that of the engines he uſes for his various pupoſes---Mr Godwin can beſt explain.

Induſtry of every ſpecies, has hitherto thriven upon the practicable maxims already ſo fully explained; nor can theſe, in common ſenſe, be relinquiſhed, in expectation of the realization of mere viſions, unfounded in any experience; the *morally practicable* is not to be diſcarded, in the idle expectation of attaining to what can barely be conceived as *phyſically poſſible.*

This practicable ſyſtem is, without doubt, pregnant with the ſeeds of growing inequality: nor do we perceive any obligation, in Chriſtian charity or (in Godwin's phraſe) in political juſtice, to relinquiſh the utility of this ſyſtem; by inſiſting, in every inſtance of attained ſuperiority, that the exceſs ſhould be diffuſed

and

and diſtributed, till the level of equality were regained. Did there exiſt any ſuch obligation, it muſt apply to mental attainments equally as to external acquiſitions. It is to be feared however that very ſmall progreſs would be made in the accumulation of either, were the time of acquiſition to be incroached upon by a continued conſcientious application to an equalizing diſtribution, ſo ſoon as ever the level of equality was diſturbed.—Were equality the teſt of juſtice, there ſeems no obvious reaſon why ſuperiority in natural talents ſhould not be held *injurious*, as much as in artificial attainments, whether mental or external; or why the poſſeſſors of the former ſhould not be extirpated if they cannot contrive to ſhare their natural ſuperiority, as well as thoſe of the latter, who refuſe to ſhare their artificial one: a phyſical neceſſity ſtands in the way in the one caſe, and (according to Godwin) an equally invincible neceſſity in the other; and, in regard to approbation or cenſure, to reward or puniſhment, both caſes are, with him, preciſely alike.*

* According to our author the only rational difference of our hatred, fear, &c. excited againſt a murderer, and a dagger which has been uſed in murder, conſiſts in this; that the murderer, being a voluntary agent of evil, his will is conſidered as a more permanent and pregnant ſource of harm than the dagger; which, from its indifference, is not ſo fertile in miſchief—*natural ſuperiority* is ſurely a more permanent ſource of the *continued injury of inequality*, and ought, by the ſame rule, to be looked upon in a worſe light than mere *artificial diſtinction*, which is of a nature leſs permanent and certain.

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